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SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION: NEW LEBANESE PRESIDENT

¶1. SUMMARY: News of the Doha Agreement and the election of General Michel Suleiman as Lebanese president preoccupied both the State-owned Arabic daily "Oman" and private Arabic daily "Al-Watan", with editorials describing it as new chapter after lengthy political disturbance, which threatened the stability of the Lebanese people. All dailies showed satisfaction with the results Doha agreement as proof that the region can solve its problems foreign powers don't interfere. END SUMMARY.

"LEBANON WINS"

¶2. On May 22, private Arabic daily "Al-Watan" (circulation 42,000) hailed the Lebanese victory over internal differences, saying "Lebanon Wins":

"Now that Lebanon has elected a president, they draw the curtain on the latest chapter of a tragic political crisis, with presence of prominent Arab figures whose good intentions helped Lebanon overcome its crisis, including H.E. the Omani Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs Yousif Bin Alawi. Oman has made a great effort in this regard through its membership on the committee formed to bridge the gap between different Lebanese factions... In fact, the greatest satisfaction lies in the fact that Arabs were and still are present in resolving the Lebanese crisis, proof that if foreign interference in [Arab] affairs ceases, internal mechanisms will address all issues and differences. Although there were charges that some Arab states interfered in Lebanese matters, [the opposing sides in Lebanon] were sure that they needed to use Arab support to deal with internal Lebanon crises."

"EXIT FROM A LONG, DARK TUNNEL"

¶3. Government-owned "Oman" (circulation 38,000) commented on May 22 on the positive role played by Arab countries and personalities who were involved in the Doha dialogue and its satisfactory results, "Lebanon's Agreement and Opening New Chapter":

"Not only Arabs and Lebanese hailed the success of the Doha Dialogue, but also regional and international voices that care about Lebanon. The desire of the Lebanese parties and their eagerness to reach satisfactory solutions; the tireless and continuous efforts made by Qatar headed by the Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, who stepped in ... to overcome obstacles and differences to bring closer different positions...; the Arab ministerial committee chaired by the Qatari Prime Minister and the presence of the Sultanate's representative, H.E. Yousif Bin Alawi, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs; the presence of a number of other Arab states and Secretary General of the Arab League Amr Moussa; all combined ... to put an end to the crisis that threatened the

stability of Lebanon and its citizens, achieving the ultimate objectives and goals represented in the Doha agreement: an exit from the long dark tunnel."

14. On May 25, "Oman" praised the new Lebanese president for restoring faith and confidence in the Lebanese Army at a time when many had lost faith in Lebanese institutions, "Electing a New President in Lebanon, Entering a New Phase":

"Today, with the election of General Michel Suleiman, the Lebanese constitutional institutions can be regarded as complete, and the period of freeze and resentment, which reached threatened the Lebanon's unique blend of ideologies, has also ended. Now the terms of forming the national unity government have been agreed on in Doha. The election of General Suleiman represents the consensus of all Lebanese forces that are looking forward to peaceful coexistence, assuring confidence in the personality of the new president, who managed to maintain the trust and support of all Lebanese parties and restoring trust and confidence in the Lebanese Army at a very sensitive time. When all Lebanese powers agree on him, any decision made by him will be regarded as a good opening for a new era for Lebanon and its people and society to revitalize and reactivate Lebanese institutions for the development of the country."

GRAPPO